



Your EAP Newsletter brought to you by **FedSource**  
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## Compulsive Spending

### Understanding a Compulsive-spending Problem

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People who continually overspend tend to be given labels such as "shopaholics" and "credit-card addicts." It is considered a compulsive-behavioral problem.

*Signs that you may have a compulsive-spending problem include:*

- Commonly buying items you don't need;
- Routinely spending beyond what you can afford;
- Routinely using one or more credit cards to pay for purchases and accumulating debt by continuing to not pay off the balance; and
- Regularly buying things to make you feel better about yourself.

*Ask yourself these questions to determine if you may have a compulsive-spending problem:*

1. Are your debts making your home life unhappy?
2. Does the pressure of your debts distract you from your daily work?
3. Are your debts affecting your reputation?
4. Do your debts cause you to think less of yourself?
5. Have you ever given false information in order to obtain credit?
6. Have you ever made unrealistic promises to your creditors?
7. Does the pressure of your debts make you careless of the welfare of your family?
8. Do you ever fear that your employer, family or friends will learn the extent of your total indebtedness?
9. When faced with a difficult financial situation, does the prospect of borrowing give you an inordinate feeling of relief?
10. Does the pressure of your debts cause you to have difficulty sleeping?
11. Has the pressure of your debts ever caused you to use alcohol or drugs?
12. Have you ever borrowed money without giving adequate consideration to the rate of interest you are required to pay?
13. Do you usually expect a negative response when you are subject to a credit investigation?
14. Have you ever developed a strict regimen for paying off your debts, only to break it under pressure?
15. Do you justify your debts by telling yourself that you are superior to other people, and when you get your "break" you'll be out of debt overnight?

If you answered yes to eight or more of these questions, you may have a compulsive-spending problem.

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## Getting Help

Like a problem gambler, a compulsive spender must accept that he or she has a problem and be willing to make a change for treatment to be successful. Most importantly, he or she must try to abstain from overspending at any time in the future.

However, willpower is sometimes not enough to overcome a compulsive-spending problem. If you can't seem to break the habit yourself, seek professional help. You may be referred to a therapist who can tailor a treatment program to suit your needs.

Treatment may include individual and group therapy, family counseling, support groups, and financial counseling.

According to the Consumer Credit Counseling Service, with the right treatment and support, it typically takes less than 30 days to break someone from the habit of spending compulsively.

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## For Additional Support

If you have other EAP concerns, please call the toll free number, **1-888-290-4EAP** or TDD access at 1-800-697-0353. This employee/family benefit is provided by your employer. "For information related to your everyday concerns, go to [www.GuidanceResources.com](http://www.GuidanceResources.com). "First Time Users" will be prompted for their company ID: **FEDSOURCE**, to register and create your own username and password.

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